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SECOND WESSEX

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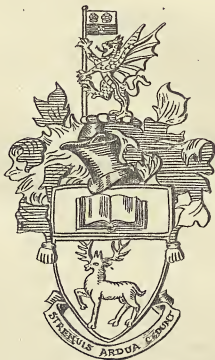
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and Silver The Helm is that of a Gentleman or
 Esquire: The Book is our mark of Occupation: The Heart is derived from a Burn on
 the name of our Founder. The Crest is a Wessex Dragon
 holding a Standard of the Arms of Southampton: The mantling or Lambrequin is of Red
 and Silver



The Arms of Southampton
University



EDITORIAL

I HAVE READ many past editorials of "Second Wessex" and within their epigrammatic space there have been frequent comments that "the Editor feels that he has been able to raise the standard."

With due regard to the conceptions of my predecessors I must say that I regard such a statement as a fallacy. The standard of "Second Wessex" is set by all those who contribute to its pages and not by the individual who edits them. For any single person, editor or otherwise, to attempt to set a dominant standard is foolhardy; and in pursuing such an aim that person must commit a grave injustice to the entire University. It is for the University to decide whether "Second Wessex" is worthy to be called a literary magazine or not. If it is not, then there is only one course open: it must be suppressed. It is in the interests both of literature and of our own prestige that we do not foster a mere masquerade of literature.

The task of obtaining sufficient material is a large enough problem for an editor to cope with and he may justly leave the University to decide the standard upon which he must base his selection.

If I have departed from the usual epigrammatic editorial it is for this purpose: the future of "Second Wessex" hangs in the balance. Unless the University shows more interest in it, unless it manifests that it wants such a magazine (and this we may judge only from the support given), and is willing to accept the fact that it must provide the material, then plainly we shall read: "'Second Wessex,' 1956. R.I.P."

The University,
Southampton.

J. DANIEL BANNON.
Editor.

SPACE ERA

The quiet moon with holy gaze
Once moved her being in God's sight
Alone amidst a starlit haze
She endured her Maker's sight.

The moon, a magic word for love,
An age-old symbol of delight,
A young man's dream set gold above,
An image of his youth's swift flight.

The moon by which the nightingale
Forever sang of her sad plight
While dumb, the swallow swept the dale,
And fluttered in her terror's fright.

The moon, a charted yellow toy,
Swings idling without might,
Is threatened so that joy
Has retreated overnight.

But has the mystery also gone?
Not while a bird still sings,
Not while the ever-present sun
Breathes its light on all things.

MARGARET E. LUSCOMBE.

FROM: A LETTER TO SYBIL

Your home in Rhondda Valley lies,
Beneath the light of narrow skies.
But on the mountains skies are wide
Where stunted silver-birches ride-
Out the storms from the South-West
And in Spring ferns do their best
To clothe the valley sides in green
And hide the brown that there has been.
One even finds a clump that peeps
On inhospitable breasts of black slag heaps.
"The Tips" that near run to the street
Where terraced houses fail to meet;
These narrow streets where children play
And daylight early fades away.
"Why do their parents let them out?"
Ask chapel deacons, and the rest
Who think that life is just a pest.
Upon the mountain-sides above
The adolescents play at love.
Where ferns are tall, and soft, and warm
Can Dai and Megan come to harm?
Will the word "sex" ere foul the mind
When, at last, true love they find?
No! There they lie beneath a tree,
Where none but the full moon can see,
To love each other from the heart
And swear that they will never part.

TERRY REES.

WHITHER THE YOUNGER GENERATION?

SOME YEARS AGO I used to listen to "Under Twenty Review" on the Light Programme and I must admit that my opinion of it was not very high. In fact, I considered that I could do better than those taking part. It was this thought that prompted me to write to the producer for an audition. To my immense surprise I received a formal reply requesting me to present myself at No. 1 Portland Place, where I would be auditioned and interviewed along with more than a hundred others.

The audition was nerve-racking to say the least. It necessitated reading two scripts without preparation and also interviewing one of the other prospective broadcasters. Like many others I went away expecting to hear no more of the matter; but some weeks later I received a letter asking me if I would be available to view two films, read a book, and take part in a broadcast the following week. Without hesitation I accepted and my short radio career had begun.

My particular contribution was to talk about Vaughan William's "Sinfonia Antartica" and its connection with the film "Scott of the Antarctic." This was duly discussed with producer and I set about gleaning sufficient material for my script. Fortunately I had heard the symphony a month previous, this and the fact that the B.B.C. arranged a special showing of the film were of considerable help. The other topics in the programme were upon a Harold Lloyd film and Anne Frank's "Diary of a Young Girl."

All was set. I prepared my script, saw the film, "Grandma's Boy," and half read the book. A day before the broadcast was due to be recorded I received an impressive-looking contract and discovered that, to my joy, not only did the B.B.C. pay for two visits to the cinema and also for a book in addition to granting the privilege of broadcasting, but also that they would pay for my services.

The work for the evening's recording was arranged so that we had an hour in which to rehearse our individual scripts and to acquire some ideas for spontaneous discussion. The recording took thirty-five minutes, leaving the producer five minutes for editing. This editing was salvation indeed. All coughs and

splutters were missing in the broadcast version, and also numerous faux pas had been carefully removed. During the rehearsal my beautiful script was altered beyond recognition. Believe me, tales of the ruthlessness of producers are very true. Nothing daunted, I continued, saying but half of what I had intended to say but saying it in a way that the producer liked. The un-scripted discussion was interesting and enjoyable. After the recording, which went without a hitch, we descended to the depths of Broadcasting House to the canteen, where one literally rubbed shoulders with the famous.

I half feared that this would be my only broadcast, but these fears were ungrounded and I was fortunate enough to be on the air many times. On these subsequent occasions my subjects ranged from science-fiction to opera, from jazz to books on aviation.

The broadcasts were both thrilling and enjoyable with but one exception; that was the occasion of my one and only live broadcast, the others being pre-recorded. It was perhaps the knowledge that I was speaking directly to people without the assurance of the producer's editing which made me especially nervous. The programme was "Summer Parade," described in the "Radio Times" as "an out-door magazine programme concerning the varied activities of the younger generation." It lasted half an hour and consisted of interviews and eye-witness reports of events. There was a compere, whose unhappy lot it was to introduce these recordings in such a way that they seemed to be happening at the time. I was that unhappy compere. I sat in a studio, facing alone the terrors of a belligerent microphone, a script and a glass of water. An engineer leered at me through the producer's glass panel as the red light went on and the green cue light blinked coldly at me. My stomach churned as I realised that I was speaking to about two million people, and I envied those who had said their say into a tape-recorder; but the ordeal was soon over and the red light went out as I heard the announcement of the next programme.

Now that I have reached the age of discretion my services are no longer required by Under-Twenty programmes, but who knows? I have fallen a victim of the doubtful lure of broadcasting, but, being now but an ignorant scientist, it seems more probable that I shall leer from the engineer's box than, facing a microphone, be leered at myself.

JOHN F. MILLAR.

ELLIPSE

September

Love faded with the falling of the leaves,
And each leaf was the lost meeting of the lips :
She left without scorn, and offered no regret,
As if it were natural the end should come,
Just at the beginning.

April

First signs of Spring and the leaves are new again,
Fresh for a beginning with no ending,
Evergreen and ever-living.

Bring flowers for Diana and a bear for Aphrodite
And a new-born child for the sun :

In sacrifice lies the re-birth,
And Christ lives again at Easter.
All lives again,
For the leaves curl and the eyes smile,
And the tears of April caress the earth;
A gentle kiss in the soothing rain
Breathes a future for every living thing.

But, sad cycle of hope, hopeless cycle of faith—
For as soon as born starts the dying.

No sooner does the sun shine than the night falls;
No sooner does Icharus enter heaven than he burns
in hell.

But, better to be burnt high
Than be bound to the ground;
Better to walk in the sun's heart
Than to grovel in the stones.

September

I saw Christ one afternoon;
He came walking over the sea
Along an avenue of sunlight
And said, "Come with me."
I answered, "Don't be a fool,"
And turned and left him.

And when I turned again
He had gone. And the waters were darkened

And the winds blew, and the sand
Crumbled under me.

The leaves withered and the root died,
And great was the mourning.

April

The wind played the organ
And the sea was our choir,
When Heaven married Hell in the starlight.

Our children were the orphans of Time
And the heirs of Circumstance,
And their wisdom came of the open fields.

Every dawn was a vision of heaven,
And every sunset prelude to a new dawn.

CLIFFORD EVELEIGH.

"WHITHER . . . ?"

A churchyard in the moonlight is an eerie place
Where shadows dance, ghosts walk,
And mouldered bones lie press'd to dust
By God's good earth, which once they walked as we.
Beneath some turf-squared mound, or vase of flowers,
Who knows what dumb activity proceeds?
What of the upturned staring eyes,
The hank of hair uncrumbled,
The uneroded teeth . . . ?

MARTIN KYRLE.

"I ASK A QUESTION"

Is it possible to reconcile Symphonic Music with
Popular Modern Music?

"THE EXCELLENCE OF MUSIC is to be measured by pleasure. But the pleasure must not be that of chance persons; the finest music is that which delights the best and best educated, and especially that which delights the one man who is pre-eminent in virtue and education." This quotation from Plato's "Laws" has great significance for us to-day in this modern world. In fairness to the readers of this article, who will represent a cross-section (of the people) from jazz enthusiasts to the uppermost stratum of Classical Music lovers, I will say that each must, and no doubt will, judge Plato's saying to suit himself. The music that gives them most pleasure will obviously appeal to them most, symphonic music will give most pleasure to those who appreciate it, and lighter music for those who interest themselves in popular songs and jazz for their pleasure.

I wish to make clear at the outset that I am convinced no one can appreciate both classes of music. A Biblical saying comes to my mind and is appropriate here: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other." Symphonic and Modern Music—using the term Modern Music, throughout, to refer to music from Modern Jazz to popular songs and light music—are two incompatible forms of music. I digress a moment here to answer many who from time to time have asked me why the term "Classical" has been applied to Symphonic Music. "Classical" means of the first class and of universally accepted excellence. A classic form is standard and first class, of a simple, harmonious, proportioned and finished style. From this it should be obvious enough why Symphonic Music is so called. Now I return to the main theme. As one person recently remarked, they "hate the sight and sound of each other." The gap separating Jazz from Classical Music may be fully grasped by imagining what Turkish music must have sounded like to Mozart in the early seventeenth century. No, these two forms, so opposite to one another, have never mixed successfully; they do not now, and indeed they may be likened to oil and water for all that they will combine in the future.

In discussions on this subject it has been pointed out to me that if a person who fervently admires the Classics goes to a dance and enjoys it he must like modern dance music. I maintain that in all dances the music takes second place and that one may appreciate dancing without the music. Jazz, too, such a person could dance to, as it is in itself a form of physical recreation, but to listen only to the noise—I use that word intentionally—is more than mind or heart is able to stand.

Modern Music has rhythm and a melody. These are present in dance music as well, but once these are grasped what else is there? The melody is so naïve that once it is heard the mind has nothing left to absorb. Is it that the human mind is so superficial? Modern popular music—in this sense music for the people—has its effect, but this is transient and once the rhythm and time are understood there remains nothing. That raises the question of what else is there, other than melody and rhythm, in Classical Music? It is said that true music is the natural expression of a lofty passion for a right cause. This underlies all Classical Music, of which each and every piece has a plan and a purpose. The intricate planning of a symphonic composition, the dexterous intermingling of melody, the linkage of passages, the skilful balance maintained in the musical instruments employed are just a few of the qualities present.

In spite of the fact that these two forms of music—Classical and Modern—are incompatible, many modern, serious composers have sought to adopt jazz forms in their own music. No such composer has, however, succeeded in assimilating jazz and symphonic music with any great success. These composers have been influenced by Modern Music to a greater or lesser extent. Many instances exist like Stravinsky in "Ragtime," Lambert in "The Rio Grande," Weill in "Mahogany and Dreigroschenoper," the Operas of Blitzstein, "Jonny Spielt auf" by Krenek, Hindemith in "Kammermusik No. 1." Other attempts include "Billy the Kid," a Ballet by Copland, Milhaud's "La Création du Monde" and "Le Bœuf sur le Toit," and probably the best known of all, the "Rhapsody in Blue" by George Gershwin. Only a few months ago—at the end of October, 1955—a German composer made yet another assay in this direction. It was Liebermann's "Concerto for Symphony Orchestra and Jazz Band." It had many surprising

features but was on the whole unsuccessful in its endeavours to amalgamate the two forms.

This new trend in "the Modernist" composer makes me say something which will I feel sure be objectionable even to some supporters of the Classics. Of this Modern Music which is termed Classical by the more lenient of listeners, how much is going to endure? A great deal I feel is doomed irrevocably to failure and oblivion. How much will remain of the works by Britten, Stravinsky, Hindemith or Schoenberg, for example, to take only a few, in a hundred years? Only that which is great successfully stands the supreme test of time. Some music written in living memory has already passed into obscurity.

Why is this so? I feel it is because these composers have tried to mix Symphonic Music and Modern Jazz but have succeeded rather in only juxtaposing them. Attempted intermingling has served to undermine the qualities that their music, without the aid of jazz forms, might have possessed.

Now I come to an extremely controversial and provocative question. Is Symphonic Music to be preferred to Jazz and Modern Popular Music? Many, if not the majority of people, would think not and say that in any case it was entirely a matter of personal taste. But is it so much a matter of taste as people would have you think? As I have said, the gap between the two kinds of music cannot be bridged. One can cross from one to the other; one cannot straddle the two. The superficial mind, which requires always some music which is simple and not profound, finds its pleasure in light music. Often, though, because Symphonic Music appears so profound at first hearing to the ordinary persons, they shun it and do not attempt to understand it. The nature of Symphonic Music is simplicity, but it is a simplicity which must be thought about and comprehended. I venture to say that the people who do not appreciate the Classics have minds incapable of thought and prefer, instead, to have what they term music to be handed to them, rather, on a plate; a method which, requiring no effort on their part, suggests inactivity of the mind and inability to grasp even that which is based on innate simplicity!

During the few years that I have spent listening to and playing Classical Music, I have noticed many differences in the

other kind of music. Modern composers—shall I call them such?—of Jazz and Popular Music generally seem powerless to make music of their own. They seem ruthless in plagiarizing major classical works of wonderful melodic texture and beauty for tunes to supplement their own meagre brains, endeavouring thereby to make their own paltry efforts a success. Examples are numerous; for instance there is the melody from the "Polovtsian Dances" by Borodin which is placed before an undiscriminating public as "Stranger in Paradise." (The majority are indeed, unfortunately, strangers in a Paradise of music which could be theirs if they wished!) Again a beautiful melody, which all the handling of lesser men could not make more magnificent, from Rachmaninov's "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" has been converted into a song, played invariably by racious trumpets or clarinets in an incoherent mass of noise by a modern band. Exquisite melodies from Chopin have also been abused in this way. I might add that this plagiaristic tendency is prevalent among the other Arts as well. To take just one example from many, one thinks of a recent attempt to corrupt parts of a certain tragedy by Shakespeare into a modern gangster film. Where, might I ask, is this degradation of men's thoughts leading them?

Another aspect I have noticed of Modern Popular Music is that, light in texture as a popular song usually is, it needs often not just the one writer but two, three or even four occasionally, to write it. That is one may write the tune and another the words. It must be such a difficult task for one brain insufficiently equipped with adequate grey matter!

When I say that popular songs have two, three, or even four writers—one writing the tune, the other the words—my critics will say that Opera is more often than not written by two people. A composer writes the music and another the libretto. But consider the depth of difference between songs and Opera! From what I have previously said it should be clear how great is the gulf that separates these two forms of music, with drama and words as an addition. The libretto in Opera takes a subordinate place; the music is by far the most important part. "One must hear the words," people say. They are often so intent on listening for the words that they miss the quality of the music, the subtleties of the scenes, the beauty of the costumes, and the dramatic significances. All these are bound together in the music; music gives the soul to Opera.

Besides this many Operas have the music and libretto written by the one composer. Such instances are "Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg," "Der Ring des Nibelungen," and "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg" by Wagner; "I Pagliacci" by Leon Cavallo; and others to take only a few examples. Nevertheless, two fields of composition are involved; one of Music, the other of Poetry; both are a world in themselves. That they should separately be conceived and then formed into an Opera is not difficult to understand, neither is it to be discredited.

Having already referred to the importance of time I will now enlarge upon it. Music written three or four hundred years ago—music, for instance, by Beethoven, Mozart or Bach—is as much alive to-day as it was when first composed. There must be something profound, solid and marvellous in a piece of music which can survive that number of years. How much popular modern music lasts more than two or three weeks—if that? True it is that that which is immediately acceptable proves, in the end, to be worthless. People bring forward the argument that good music may be alright but it is played too often. They say it is hackneyed. This hackneyed music however has stood the supreme trial of time—and that is precisely why it is hackneyed. Only good music is played to such a degree.

If one kind of music lives *why does another die?* There is no originality in Modern Jazz or Popular Music. As I have said they sometimes take their melodies from others. More than this, however, is that all the methods they try to adopt have been previously used in one classical form or another. The fundamental beat in jazz is its weak point. Most jazz improvisations are only ornamental ones, hampered nearly always by an eight or sixteen phrase repetition. This was adopted occasionally by the seventeenth and eighteenth century composers. Again the basis of jazz is the dance form. These, too, were exploited by fourteenth century writers of church and secular music, and afterwards by others, notably Bach. Clearly the influence of serious music on jazz has been far more important and far-reaching than is readily acknowledged by enthusiasts of the latter. Finally, then, the reasons why Popular Modern Music is doomed to failure are that it lacks discipline through being devoid of plan or purpose; it lacks the quality of

music, in the strictest sense of the word, and is devoid of consistency; beauty finds no part in it. Finally, there is no such thing as inspiration to be found there.

In conclusion, then, whatever my views may be there will always be two armed camps, and whenever they come together on the battlefield one will never beat the other in conflict. Oil and water do not mix, both nevertheless may be considered to be a necessity in their own right. Each hates the sight of the other. My own views have, I hope, made themselves apparent during the course of this article.

I say again that it is sheer stupidity to be under the impression that Classical Symphonic Music and popular Modern Music can be appreciated at the same time. Emphatically I believe that either one likes the Classics and shuns Jazz and Popular Music, or is a Jazz enthusiast and has no time for music "of a highbrow nature."

This article has been designed partly to be provocative. It has failed in its attempts if it does not provoke dissension in those who disagree and approval by those who sympathise. It all depends on what basis and how elevated is a person's sense of values. Is the pseudo-melodic, noisy, formless inanimate embodiment of modern light popular music, without beauty, grace or skill whatever, sufficient for the mind? For a mind which is like that, yes. It has a superficial appeal to the unthinking and passive person only. Classical Music, on the contrary, appeals to all that is noble, true and beautiful in the mind of man. In itself, it embodies all these—that is what ensures its everlasting endurance. "The law of nobleness in Music is essentially the necessary and natural expression of pure and virtuous human joy."

PETER WILLIAM DOVER.

NO DAWN FOR THE DEAD

Slow
Fall leaves
To the ground
Mellowing brown
They sink underfoot
And summer's glory fades
Spring's young joy and hope have gone
And cold blows the wind through the trees
Brushing aside the last leaves of life
Burying dead nature with jeering breeze
Snow drifts down and covers the grey corpse
A sleepy shroud of silent woe
With black mourning trees upthrust
Towards the brooding sky
Hiding Earth's sorrow
Dark night has come
Tomorrow
Will come
Dawn.
Too late.
We are dead
Though others come
And take our places
We are gone for good
Consolation?
There is none
For us.
Dead.

DAVID KEMSLEY.

THE END OF A CHAPTER

IT IS my last evening in Ricasoli—after a year I am at last going home. It seems too unreal to be true; to think that the life of Malta, by now grown natural within me, is nearly over. To think that in a few days I shall be among people for whom Lascaris, Sliema and dghaisa are not household words; people who cannot share my pictures of life—the winter gales in the Grand Harbour and the crystal-clear blueness of the waters of Comino—the smell of rotting vegetables in the market and the incense of St. Peter's Cathedral—the neon lights of Kingsway and the Hypogeum of Hal Saflieni—a kaleidoscope, unimaginable to anyone who has not lived on the island. Soon I shall be home—among people who think of Malta only as an island somewhere in the Mediterranean, vaguely connected with Nelson and Napoleon.

Vague were my own conceptions of my future home when my 'plane touched down a year ago. But now I am half a Maltese myself in my love for the island. In what other year of my life can I hope to experience for the first time so many and varied things in so small an area? My first contact with the top secret messages that were to become my daily routine; my first introduction to the Gut; the first time I went underwater fishing; the first time I kissed a Maltese girl; all these made a pattern of infinite light and shade—an adventure unapproachable in prosaic England.

Yet, it is over. Here I sit on the roof of the old fort which guards the entrance to Grand Harbour, looking for the last time out over the Mediterranean. Behind me rise the walls of Valletta, unscaled since they were built against the Turks in 1568. Before me lies the open sea, not a solitary fishing boat to raise white foam on the clear blue depths. The evening sun pours out its dying rays on my left shoulder and the church bell rings in the city, filling the sunset with their cracked harmony.

Perhaps it is these bells which have left the deepest impression. How is it the unkind describe Malta—"Yells, bells and smells"? Unkind . . . but true! No self-respecting Maltese has ever been heard to whisper when he could shout, nor has a taxi driver been known to ask the correct fare. With a

hundred degrees in the shade the smell of the market in summer with bad oranges everywhere is striking, but at all times and in all places it is the bells that claim first notice. In this island, gripped in the suffocating grasp of the Roman Catholic Church, the priest is all powerful. Defy him, and the native Maltese has jeopardised his livelihood, for he will never be able to find work again except with the English. To us it is inconceivable that a man should be denied anything because of his religious beliefs; but in Malta it is still true.

Yet, if one accepts, without reproach, the people of Malta for what all too many of them are—dirty, dishonest, religious, lazy—one cannot help admiring a people who have managed to survive at all in the face of the dangers which constitute their national history. They speak with pride of how they defeated the Turks at the Great Siege of 1565; but it was not they who defended the island but the Knights of St. John. The Maltese were merely a subject population, as they had been under the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans before. Yet they survived, living by the motto of "breed, and the good Lord shall provide," to such an extent that now 312,000 people are packed into 95 square miles.

Their island reflects their long history. At Mnajdra, a megalithic temple 8,000 years old, and at Ghar Dalam a cave reputed to be even older; the early Christian catacombs at Rabat; the walled city of Mdina, a supreme example of medieval fortifications; the walls of Valletta; the dome of Mosta, a parish church boasting the seventh largest dome in the world; the N.A.T.O. buildings and the Hotel Phoenicia at the other end of the scale.

To the visitor to Malta all these are to be seen, and they will impress him in various degrees. He may delight in the cinemas and bars of Valletta and Sliema, where he can drink through the early hours; or in the Blue Grotto of Zurrieq and the sands of Paradise Bay; or perhaps in the first view of Mdina, rising sheer above the surrounding countryside and topped by the towers of St. Peter's; or yet again in Grand Harbour, filled with the ships of half the world. For myself, the most moving moment remains at Mnajdra; I shall always treasure the memory of a summer day, standing alone on a cliff-top overlooking the rocky islet of Filfla, gazing at the excavations of a temple built

by men who also, generations ago, stood on that same cliff-top. One can see still the tracks of their carts running beneath the sea showing that the island was once connected to Sicily.

Sunset has fallen and now the view is obscured. So is it with us, so our monuments, shining to-day, will become indistinct, mere items of curiosity. But they will remain . . . just as those tracks have survived an age by the edge of the sea.

MARTIN KYRLE.

THE STATE OF MIND PRODUCED
BY READING THOMAS HARDY'S POEMS

Out of the Shadowy past and the faint grey webs of Time,
Out of the vaulted dark and the chill void chambers of Death,
Out of the coffined dead and the sadness of times long past
I am given my breath.

My life is a pause in the stagger and movement of Time,
Is controlled by those ancestors lost in the dark and the gloom;
Fate threw them together to fuse and produce a life—
I arose from their tomb.

And now I go onward, pur-blind in the brightness of life,
Mine eyes being fashioned for darkness and thick webs of death;
Soon will their fingers—dead fingers that clutch me—impel,
And I resign my breath.

Soon shall my bones and my memory be coffined in dust,
And, my life-spark extinguished, in darkness and mist I shall lie,
One with my forefathers, hid in the mystery of Time,
One with the long-gone-by.

JOAN M. MOLLAND.

HEINRICH HEINE—THE MAN AND HIS WORK

(Written to mark the centenary of the poet's death)

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO this month, Germany lost one of her greatest poets. On 17th February, 1856, after a long and painful illness which had imprisoned him in his bed for eight years, Heinrich Heine died in Paris. He was 58.

In this country, Heine is probably best remembered as the writer of songs such as "Auf Flügeln des Gesanges" (On Wings of Song"), "Die Beiden Grenadiere" ("The Two Grenadiers"), "Der Doppelgänger" ("The Wraith") and many others, which have been set to music by a number of composers, Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn among them. Perhaps the most famous of all his poems is the lovely "Lorelei," which has long been accepted as a German folk-song.

Yet Heine was more than a romantic poet. A brilliant conversationalist with a biting wit, a penetrating critic with a keen insight into the affairs of his day, an outstanding journalist with absolutely no inhibitions, he quickly made for himself an international reputation and a host of enemies. For this reason, opinions about the man and his work have differed widely, according to the personal preferences and prejudices of the individual reader. On one thing, however, all are agreed: that his love-poems are among the most beautiful in the whole of German literature. Their secret lies in their extreme simplicity, which gives them the true ring of the folk-song, so easy to sing and to learn, but so difficult to translate. (Fortunately for the English-speaking world, excellent translations of most of Heine's poetry and much of his prose have been made by Louis Untermeyer, who succeeds in capturing the spirit of this unusual writer, and can be strongly recommended to anyone unable to tackle Heine in the original.)

Heine's love-poetry has all the charm and freshness of the medieval love-lyric. His themes are as old and as well-known to each one of us as love itself, and as eternally new. Heine puts into verse his own experience of the joys and sorrows of love, of that first moment of rapture when, in the lovely month of May, love bursts into blossom in the heart as the flowers shoot forth their buds ("Im wunderschönen Monat Mai"), of the utter despair of the youth whose love is not returned—the "old,

old story that is always new, and which, whenever it happens, breaks someone's heart in two" ("Ein Juengling liebt ein Maedchen"). Heine had a passionate and sensitive nature. The bitter disappointment of his unrequited love for his cousin Amalie in Hamburg, who married while he was away at the University of Goettingen, inspired the "Dichterliebe" poems (well-known in Schumann's setting) and continued to haunt him for the rest of his life. In his poetry he constantly refers to the faithlessness of woman, often regarding her, and man's love for her, as a kind of demonic force working for the downfall of man, in spite of, or rather because of, her fatal fascination for him.

This view of woman is most eloquently expressed in the famous "Loreley" poem, in which Heine represents the Loreley as a beautiful woman who sits on the rock which bears her name, combing her golden hair with a golden comb and singing a strange melody. A boatman, sailing by in his small craft, is so entranced by her music and her beauty that he cannot take his eyes from the lovely vision, and does not notice the rocks, which in the end wreck his boat; he disappears into the waters of the Rhine, a victim to the magical powers of woman, of love and of song.

Not that Heine was in any sense a misogynist; far from it. But perhaps this old legend appealed so strongly to his imagination because it summed up the conflict that was always present within his own soul—the conflict between thinking and feeling, between doing and dreaming, between action and passion; the conflict between planting one's feet firmly on the ground and losing one's head in the clouds, the eternal struggle between Realism and Romanticism. This inner uncertainty may account for many of the contrasts and inconsistencies to be found in Heine's writings. Over-sensitive and easily hurt, he was forced into a cruel cynicism in sheer self-defence. While his heart remained sentimental, his mind developed a critical faculty of the clearest judgment and the sharpest, most malicious wit. In true Romantic tradition, he put his own sufferings into verse; but he later learned to laugh at his sorrows, and at himself for having taken them seriously, and at his readers for having believed him all the time. His work thus becomes uneven in tone, full of sudden changes of mood and unexpected tricks. Heine delights and amuses us, shocks us, plays with us, takes

us up with him on the highest flights of poetic fancy, suddenly lets us down to earth with a bump, and then laughs at us for listening to him. This literary practical-joking is Heine's own particular brand of irony. He laughs at everything—love, life, death, even God; nothing is sacred to him. One never knows when to take him seriously, or what to expect next; and this makes his writings all the more interesting, intensely alive, and very "modern."

Like his works, Heine's character is an odd mixture. He was born on 13th December, 1797, in Duesseldorf on the Rhine. During his boyhood, this part of Germany came under French occupation, and the young poet conceived a deep love for France and a profound admiration for Napoleon, who seemed to him the personification of the ideals of the French Revolution. Jewish by birth, educated by French Catholic priests, Heine was later baptised into the Lutheran Church, but more for expediency than out of conviction. Nephew of a millionaire who tried in vain to set him up in business, he was sent to the University of Bonn to study law, without having the slightest interest in the subject. From Goettingen, where he continued his studies, he was rusticated for six months on a duelling charge, whereupon he went to Berlin and made a name for himself in literary and social circles; returning to Goettingen, he graduated in 1825. Restless, never at home, always in trouble and often in debt, he spent the next few years wandering from place to place and from one woman to another. (In England, which he visited in 1827, he had a flirtation with a certain Kitty, who appears in one of his poems conveniently rhymed with "the City.") In 1831 he settled in Paris, where, but for two short visits to his mother in Hamburg, he remained for the rest of his life, and where marriage (1841) and paralysis (1848) finally put an end to his wanderings.

Meanwhile, his fearless criticism of the German government had led to the banning of his works by the Metternich regime. Heine was an outspoken champion of liberty, regarding himself rather as a fighter in the cause for freedom than as a poet. To him, the French were the chosen people of the new religion of Freedom, and Paris the new Jerusalem beyond the Rhine. Using all the literary weapons at his disposal, he made merciless attacks on all who opposed the freedom of the spirit: on the Universities with their pedantry, on the "Philistines" with

their ignorance, on the German authorities with their policy of repression. His two long poems, "Deutschland" and "Atta Troll," are brilliant satires on the Germany of his day; in the second of them, he represents the German people as a chained bear which is called upon to perform for the amusement and profit of its owner.

Kind and sympathetic by nature, Heine always defended the victims of persecution and injustice. He hated artificiality and hypocrisy, loved the simple pleasures of life. In his works he gives expression to a profound reverence for nature, and he was the first great German poet to sing of the sea—in which he may have seen reflected the restlessness of his own soul. His North Sea poems reproduce the rhythms of the waves with remarkable skill; while his "Flying Dutchman," which inspired Wagner's opera, is one of the most powerful of all sea stories, telling of the sailor who is condemned to roam the seas for ever until he is saved by the faithfulness of a woman—a kind of Loreley in reverse, symbolising the redeeming as well as the destructive force of woman's love for man.

Despite the disease which crippled and tormented him during the latter part of his life, Heine never lost his sense of humour or his vivid imagination. Some of his finest poems date from this period. In 1851 he wrote his own version of the Faust legend in the form of a ballet, in which, characteristically enough, the Devil's messenger appears as a woman, named Mephistophela. Heine's "Faust" was never performed; like much of his other work, it is full of the sensuality, vulgarity, sacrilege and obscenity for which he has so often been criticised. Yet he was never afraid of presenting life in all its aspects, and his poetry, covering the whole range of human experience and emotions, is a "criticism of life" in the full sense of Matthew Arnold's term.

It was Heine's intense love of life that gave him the strength and the courage to fight against his incurable malady for so long; yet when death came at last, Heine was ready. He had long been expecting this visitor, and as he had not been afraid to live, so he was not afraid to die—to him, after all, death was a release from his sufferings, and not the beginning of another life. Heinrich Heine was not a poet of immortality; but his poetry has made him immortal.

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In a pure crystal pool,
Canopied by glittering rocks,
Bathes a maiden,
Naked and unashamed

—this is Truth.

She is perfect in every feature,
And Love flows from her
Like the ripples in the water
As she moves

—this is Beauty.

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LIEBE

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Clasped hands,
Soft velvet lips,
Pale lantern gliding
Through the trellaced arms of trees
Two hearts in unison
Two spirits glide
Two souls elide
One kiss, one
Love, one
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